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OR

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LONDON AND DUBLIN.

THE FOUR COURTS *versus* WESTMINSTER-HALL.

If it be true with respect to mankind generally, as we believe it is, that in the acquisition of real knowledge, there is commonly more trouble and difficulty in putting away from our minds that which is false, than in storing up that which is true, this maxim will particularly apply to our countrymen, who if they do not, like Sheridan's parliamentary opponent, "trust to their memory for their wit," too often "trust to their imagination for their facts." We well remember of what a singularly fanciful and erroneous character were all the notions, (notions which we mistook for knowledge,) that we entertained of London, before the fatiguing reality of the mighty city was known to us. The House of Lords, the House of Commons, Westminster-hall—our imagination had clothed with dignity and honor, and furnished with all appliances of grandeur and importance. Downing-street, the very name of Downing-street, brought with it recollections of treaties and despatches, and battles, wars and rumors of wars, and we know not what of "pride, pomp, and circumstance," inasmuch that the *res ipsa*, the passage bounded by certain edifices of brick and mortar, scarcely ever occurred to our thoughts.

The air-drawn dagger of Macbeth, was not more unsubstantial and delusive than the pictures with which we had suffered our mind to be filled. We looked on the reality, and with a sigh, came to Macbeth's conclusion, "there's no such thing."

Most of our readers who have been in London, and who recollect their sensations after a few days residence there, (if they were not immediately absorbed in the anxieties of business, or the whirl of dissipation,) will we think agree with us, that the general feeling is that of weariness and disappointment. The stranger thinks that *he has seen London*, and says to himself, "and is this all?" but London is not a place to be known in a week, or a month, or a year; and indeed the greater part of those who have been residents there all their lives, neither know, nor think it at all surprising that they should not know, a part of the metropolis different from that in which they live, more than they know of Petersburg or Pekin.

London is indeed a place of almost overwhelming vastness, but that is a matter to be found out by gradual and fatiguing examination; it is full of mighty affairs, and the uttermost ends of the earth feel the operation of its everyday business, but this is to be discovered by reflection, rather than by any external circumstance palpable to the senses. We often hear of the "deadness and dullness" of Dublin, and the din and turmoil of London are held up to us, to heighten the sense of stillness by contrast,

until we almost think we hear the hum and shock of its vast multitude.

"Like the sound
Of some far-distant waterfall."

But the fact is, that in our miniature way, we are much more busy and bustling here, than they of the great metropolis of the empire. London is the elephant of cities, enormous but calm, and performing its mighty efforts with such habits of regular and unostentatious strength, that we only become conscious of what is doing, by reflection upon what has been and must be done. It is true, that in the great thoroughfare from Charing Cross to Whitechapel, there is a rushing sound of men, and horses, and carriages, travelling to and fro, but this is emphatically *the* great thoroughfare, and what are four or five miles of street, compared with the huge mass of London. Bond-street and Regent-street too, have at this season, much gay and lightsome bustle, and so has the broad street of Whitehall, at four o'clock, when Lords and Commons are hurrying down to their respective houses of assembly, but the wonder is, that the bustle should be so little, considering the occasion. There is probably as much money laid out in the retail shops of Bond-street and Regent-street, in one day, as in all the retail shops of Dublin in six months.

But in "the city," the calmness and utter absence of outside show, where we know there is such prodigious business, and prodigious wealth, seems very extraordinary to an Irish stranger. If he be a mercantile man, and diverges right or left from Cheapside, into the narrow streets and lanes where the sons of traffic dwell, he will hardly believe his eyes, as he reads the names which he knows to be good on change for half a million, written upon such plain dingy doors, belonging to such dull dark houses, where even the light of day seems almost to get half black, before it approaches them: and here there is no bustle. If our mercantile friend were a reader of Wordsworth, he might exclaim with him

"Dear God! the very houses seem asleep."

A clerk now and then going in, or coming out, or a stout hale porter, with his thick, laced boots, and coarse, clean, grey apron, are the only signs of life; and within doors, every office, crowded as it is with clerks, gives forth little sound, save of the opening and closing of day-book, and journal, and ledger, while the work of book-keeping goes on. The Banks too, infinitely astonish a Dublinite; he sees some dozen of them, within a street or two, the names of each of them familiar for their wealth, over all the world; he goes in, and finds a common shop—no parade of wood and wire-cages, and mysterious men of notes, within the same, occasionally revealing their countenances to the expectant public. There is a plain counter, like in a grocer's shop: not such grocer's-shops as we have now-a-days, to

astonish us with huge space, and polished mahogany, and brass, so that we may buy our pound of tea, and get dazzled with magnificence into the bargain; but like such a grocer's-shop, as we remember the Messrs. Kinahan had long ago in Trinity-street, before they shone forth in the modern glory of the Carlisle Building. Upon the banker's plain black counter, you will see an iron scoop for shovelling out sovereigns, and a plain personage behind the counter, ready to make use of the said scoop, or shovel, for your proper behoof, if you shew good and sufficient cause, in the shape of a check, or a bank-note, and here is all the grandeur of a great London Bank.

If our stranger be a literary man, he hies him to Paternoster-Row, filled with vast ideas of the magnificence of the greatest publishers in the world—he finds a long, narrow, dark, silent row, with tall, plain houses, and particularly gloomy, tranquil looking shops, with the doors all shut; inside also, there is thick darkness, and an overpowering smell of paper—huge cellars below—huge warerooms above, all plain, rough, and unadorned, stuffed with thousands upon thousands of pounds worth of printed paper, and all the living creatures within, masters and men, as chary of their speech, as if they held their shillings in their mouths, and feared that some of them would tumble out into your pocket, at every effort of utterance; business can be done with few words, and is so best done, and that, and nothing but that, will they, or can they attend to—even courtesy has in it a certain tediousness of process for which they have not at all times leisure.

If our visitor be professional, he will probably leave "the city," and with some enthusiasm, (if an Irishman,) speed towards Westminster-Hall—his mind will be filled with the idea of the crowd and bustle of his own Four Courts, and by an imaginative "rule of three," process, he will endeavour to estimate the tossing of the waves of the legal ocean of Westminster. How will he be struck agast when he enters that great Hall! The vastness, the silence, the chilly air of that noble apartment, noble in its extent, and the recollections associated with it, almost appal the stranger, as if he entered some enormous sepulchre.—Plain flags are beneath his feet—bare walls, with the plaster broken off, and laying bare, in some places, the rude stone of which they are built, environ him on either side; save where the wall is hidden from the view by a long apartment of unpainted deal boards built up against it, to hold certain parchment records. And this is the room where kings and nobles have been sat in judgment upon, and adjudged their doom; and where, but a few years since, the gorgeous magnificence of the coronation presented such a scene of imposing grandeur as imagination could hardly fancy, and eloquence could not adequately

describe. If it is term time, there may chance some one barrister walking up and down, in legal costume, but for the most part, there is not; if it be not term time, all is stillness, save the shuffling of some solitary passenger's feet along the flags, or, perhaps, a child or two running about for sport.

But we must try to compare it with our own dear temple to litigation. Whenever a Dublin lawyer wishes to silence all opposition to his opinion, he concludes his argument by the pompous announcement, "it has been so decided in Westminster-hall," which magical words at once settle the dispute. This little fact made an impression on us, in days of yore, when we used to stroll down to the Four Courts frequently, to pick up news, or enjoy half an hour's chat in the hall, with some good humoured disengaged barrister,—in Ireland a very numerous and respectable class of persons,—or if it chanced to be Nisi Prius day, to be regaled by speeches replete with feeling, spirit and animation. Often have we thought when "in town," upon the delights of *the Hall*, and every day's experience has served to confirm our opinion, that the dull tribes who haunt Westminster are eclipsed by their Irish brethren in eloquence, in wit, and we had almost said intelligence, as much as the public building for their peculiar place of bustle and resort, is surpassed by ours in architectural beauty.—There are indubitably some brilliant exceptions—a glorious few—who by the splendour of their talents, the depth of their learning, and their indefatigable exertions in the cause of science and freedom, have not merely raised the character of the profession to which they belong, but exalted the dignity of human nature; these, however, are exceptions only,—it is of the mass of the profession I speak, and unquestionably as a body of quick, sagacious, and educated gentlemen, the members of the Irish bar are superior to the lawyers of London, who, doubtless, will be seriously offended at the comparison. But we are comparing the men instead of the buildings: every man in Dublin knows what a delightful place the hall of the Four Courts is—so diversified and apparently confused—exhibiting a motley group of barristers, bailiffs, attorneys, men and women, collected from all parts, divided into smaller circles, the component members of which are severally engaged in disputing, asseverating, and denying,—in fighting over again in the hall, that which has been decided in court, or in making fresh preparations for a renewal of legal strife. Besides all these who may be called the actors in the scene, there is a vast crowd of spectators who have nothing to do, but look in and chat, and drink coffee; and whose tranquil countenances, and composed deportment, are strikingly contrasted with the vexed appearance, and hurried manner of the "plaintiffs and defendants in the cause." Now at Westminster-hall every thing is directly the reverse of this,—the exterior of the building is dark, gloomy and shabby;—the entrance mean, and narrow, so much so that one would not be in the least disappointed were he to read over it "Stabling for horses kept here." When you advance a little from the door, you would be inclined to suppose that you had got into a riding school;—the hall can be briefly described,—imagine one side of Stephen's-green covered in and flagged, with wooden boards to the height of ten feet on one side, and four large doors in the wall on the

other,—a paltry stunted wooden paling stuck out from the door leading to the King's Bench at one end, and a mean flight of stairs leading to the House of Commons, at the other;—the whole enveloped in "darkness most beautiful," and you have Westminster-hall. We are convinced were a stranger led through it without being acquainted with the character of the building, he would suppose it to be a warehouse from which the boxes of oranges had been hastily removed; but very different are the sensations of one who knows what the place really is—the solemnity and sombre aspect of the hall impress him with veneration and awe,—he remembers that here, for centuries, the laws of a great people have been administered—the rights of man boldly asserted and solemnly secured; that here Romilly and Erskine, Mackintosh and Brougham, have spoken and have gained their fame. But if that stranger be, as we have said, an Irishman, he recollects with honourable pride the memorable crisis, when Sheridan and Burke here terrified the guilty, by the thunder of their denunciations, and dazzled and delighted an assembled people and the world, by the intense splendour of their glorious eloquence.

When, for the first time, we visited Westminster, we asked in surprise, where are the lawyers? We were not gratified with the sight of a single wig. Neither was there any bustle or animation—all was motionless and still. This is easily accounted for; in London few lawyers go to Westminster unless they have business to do; while in Dublin every lawyer goes to court as regularly as he eats his breakfast, those who have business—forming the minority—to do it, and all the rest to seek for it. Again in London—besides those who practice in the courts, there are numerous classes of special pleaders and conveyancers, who never set foot within Westminster, while there is in Dublin no division of labour in the profession of the law analogous to this. And lastly, other people never dream of visiting Westminster-hall, unless on some urgent and remarkable occasion, much less would they think of frequenting it daily, as a place of recreation and amusement. We are convinced, therefore, that nothing would surprise a Londoner more than being suddenly introduced into the middle of the hall of the Four Courts, Dublin; the uproar would startle him, the strangeness of the scene would decompose even *his* gravity; and we do verily believe his curiosity *might* be so far excited, as to provoke him to ask "what was the matter." The interior of the English court of King's Bench, is, in some respects, inconvenient; the accommodation for the public is scanty—there are no side galleries; the jury box, which during term the law students are permitted to occupy, is low, and but a few feet distant from the seat allotted to the king's counsel. The barristers sit in straight rows of seats, rising gradually, but not semicircular, as in our courts. The king's counsel occupy the front row, and are shut in at each side; to the attorneys, clerks, and tipstiffs, is assigned the very limited space, which intervenes between the register's desk and the king's counsel; the attorneys sit upon a low form placed beneath and outside the front row; the consequence of which awkward arrangement is, that whenever a king's counsel wishes to speak with his attorney, he must stand up and bend over the desk, while the attorney is expected at the

same time, to elevate himself a little from his crouching position, and meet his lawyer half way. Indeed the poor attorney never stands upright at all; for if he has occasion to move, it would seem that he is allowed to do so only under the condition of creeping forward with bended head, which unpleasant manœuvre can be familiarly illustrated by the case of a goose sailing under a bridge. In this little area, also, the tipstiffs exercise their authority in preserving order; for there is no snug box in which a crier or court keeper can sit, and shout the noisy into subjection. Nor is there any thing like calling out for a barrister by the crier. Another novelty is, that there is a library in the court, and the chief employment of the tipstaff consists in hauding the books backwards and forwards; this is convenient enough for the barristers. The Common Pleas is a much better constructed court, and more convenient for students and attorneys. Here, many a time and oft, have we enjoyed the luxury of a row between Chief Justice Best and brother Wilde; but the former is now gone, and Tindal is as tranquil as Best was testy.—We should feel ourselves under many obligations to any well-disposed person, who would undertake to explain the plan of the interior of the Exchequer court,—it baffles our efforts. The architect must have been an ingenious fellow, for he has constructed a number of wooden partitions so admirably, that no one can see over or under or between them. There sits Chief Baron Alexander, who was once so near being our chancellor, a good judge, and an ugly man. We intend presenting our dear readers with personal sketches of Denman, Wilde, and Wetherell, and divers other illustrious brethren of that guild, in good time; but for the present we must content ourselves with hurrying through Westminster-hall.

It was but last Wednesday that we walked into the Hall, (for we still run over occasionally to see what o'clock it is at St. Paul's,) and the silence of the vast area was unbroken, save by the striking of the battledore against the shuttlecock of a child, as the urchin strove, with ridiculous effort, to make the plaything ascend towards the lofty roof, while his utmost strength was insufficient to send it a sixth part of the distance.

We pushed forward into the House of Lords, which was sitting to decide appeals. Who is there (at a distance,) that hears of an appeal to the Lords, without attaching to it, in his imagination, some external circumstance of grandeur and importance? Who is there that has paid the expense of an appeal, who does not *feel* that there is nothing *trifling* in the solemn settlement of his cause? But we, who looked upon the matter, could see nothing in it grand, nor important, nor solemn. The Lord Chancellor sat upon a crimson cushion at the head of the table in the centre of the apartment, with one leg resting on the knee of the other, while two noble Lords sat on the benches to his right, one of them studying the Times newspaper, the other, diligently occupied with the Morning Herald. Sir Edward Sugden was stating, in a calm conversational tone, the points of his case at the bar, while Mr. Horne sat, waiting till his turn for reply—two attorneys were in attendance with bags of papers, and there were besides, three listeners, who appeared to be country strangers, come in to look at the House. Such was the imposing appearance of an appeal to the House of Lords.

We mention these things, not that they are at all important in themselves, but we think they will serve to dispossess many persons here, of extravagant notions respecting the outward show of London. Where the business of the place is show, the Londoners, no doubt, far exceed us in the production of things gorgeous and magnificent, which take the senses captive, but then, they are very expensive, and he who has not much money to spare, rather sighs at the knowledge of that which is so near him, and which he cannot enjoy, than partakes in greater pleasures on account of his situation. Moreover, there is frequently about their amusements a something methodical, and elaborate, and troublesome, which we of lighter spirits contrive to dispense with—for the English much more frequently give an air of business to their pleasure, than of pleasure to their business.

Upon the whole, we would have the dwellers in our own Dublin believe, that so far as situation goes, they need make no lamentation that they are not Londoners. They have, for its extent, a more beautiful city, and they are as a people, more social and joyous than the people of London.

We wish them to feel this, and to be proud of their city, and to endeavour to make it in all respects worthy of even yet more estimation. We would have them to defer less to the name of London, as if every thing to which it was attached, were on that account alone, particularly worthy of consideration—let them strive to imitate and rival London in every thing which makes a city respectable; and while they acknowledge the supremacy of the British metropolis as the seat of government, seek to make their own city its equal in every other respect, of which circumstances will permit.

REVIEWS OF BOOKS.

The Animal Kingdom, arranged in conformity with its organization. By the Baron Cuvier, Supplementary Volume on the Fossils, large 8vo. pp. 544. London: Whittaker, Treacher and Co.

WHEN we consider how little is known of the internal structure of the globe, how shallow in proportion to its diameter is the greatest depth to which men have yet penetrated, and in how few instances has the arrangement of the strata been determined with accuracy, we may well be surprised at the hardihood of those who have ventured to propound "theories of the earth," and have asserted that the science of geology is a surer guide than revelation.—A wasp that has driven his sting into an elephant's back, has made as close an approach to a perfect investigation of the animal's anatomy, as man has yet made to the knowledge of the earth's structure. The volcano sends up its volumes of smoke and columns of flame, but we know not the fuel that feeds its ceaseless fires. Earthquakes change a smiling garden into a wilderness, but we cannot discover what cause has waked their energies, nor by what laws they are regulated. Still less can we pretend to ascertain the history of the many revolutions to which the earth has been subjected,—revolutions which certainly have taken place, since we find in successive strata organic remains of lost generations of animals, which, like medals and coins in the history of nations, afford some slight glimpses of the history of the

world. The study of Fossil Osteology, though comparatively of recent date, has already overthrown the dreamy speculations of those system-makers who pretended to explain all the mysteries of creation, and to untie the Gordian knot, "familiar as their garter."—As a science, however, it is yet in its infancy; Baron Cuvier was the first who reduced the researches into the subject, to any thing like a system; his example has roused others to a glorious emulation, but still the difficulties that impede the pursuit, are so numerous and so great, that ages must pass by before Fossil Osteology can be ranked as a science. The volume now before us, is one in the series of that great undertaking, "*The Animal Kingdom*;" it comprises all the information which we have yet been able to obtain respecting those fossils which have been rather affectingly denominated the organic remains of a former world; but as extracts would not convey to our readers any correct notion of a volume so varied, and yet so condensed, we shall endeavour to supply them with a brief sketch of what may be considered as established on this important subject.

The globe, as far as it has been examined, appears to consist of several *strata*, one above the other, like the coats of an onion; in these the remains of various animals have been discovered; beneath them all lies granite, in which no organic forms can be traced. Here then, we have a strong proof of the first great truth of religion—the fact of a creation—for the absence of all animal remains from the primitive rocks clearly shews that there was a period when living things had no existence. In the successive strata,—transition, secondary, and tertiary,—are discovered those fossil bones, which form the subject of our enquiries; they belong, in many instances, to races of animals totally extinct, in many others to animals which no longer inhabit the countries where these remains are found; and they prove, beyond a possibility of dispute, that this earth has been subjected to several successive revolutions, of whose age, duration, and extent, we know absolutely nothing. Some persons have foolishly enough imagined, that such a belief is inconsistent with the Mosaic account of the creation; but a very little consideration will shew, that the Mosaic narrative so far from being weakened, derives additional strength from such a hypothesis. Moses, it must be remembered, wrote not as a philosopher. Revelation was intended for a higher purpose than to teach men natural history: he merely states, that this universe was called into existence by an All-powerful Being, and that it was furnished with inhabitants by several successive acts of creation. The intervals of time are indeed called days; but there are many passages in scripture, which fully prove, that by the word day is meant not merely twenty-four hours, but any definite cycle. If this be borne in mind, we shall soon find that the facts which have been lately discovered, are in beautiful accordance with the account given in Genesis. Transition rocks lie above the granite, in these are found the *debris* of marine animals, belonging for the most part to extinct species, and indicating that the earth was once totally covered by an ocean, supporting races of animals, which ceased to exist when an ocean of a different nature was substituted in its place. Now, we find in Genesis, that the formation of dry land was the third operation of creative energy; conse-

quently before that epoch, the earth must have been covered with water.

We find also that the nature of this watery surface underwent a great change at the second stage of creation, for the gaseous fluids of the atmosphere, which had been formerly mingled with the ocean, were then separated from it by what our translators call the firmament. The division between transition and secondary strata, is marked by the co-ordinate formations of porphyry and pit-coal; in these, for the first time in our ascent, we meet traces of vegetable life; and in accordance with this, we find in the sacred writings, that after the change had been effectuated in the great ocean which covered the face of the globe, dry land and vegetation succeeded. In these formations, and in all the strata beneath them, we find no traces of quadrupeds, not even of the more imperfect kinds. The first traces are found a step higher in the secondary formations, where specimens of the lizard family have been discovered, mingled with innumerable bones of fishes, chiefly analogous to those at present found in fresh water. As we still ascend, we meet with remains of reptiles, which surpass in dimensions the fabled monsters of antiquity; they seem for the most part to belong either to the inhabitants of the deep, or to amphibious animals, and they are usually surrounded by the *debris* of fish. There is one of these animals particularly remarkable, it is called the ptero-dactyl, or flying lizard, and seems to have been one of the most formidable of created beings. It appears that it could sustain itself in the air, and it was armed with monstrous jaws, pointed teeth, and formidable talons. Another of these reptiles, the megalosaurus, must have been, according to Buckland's calculation, nearly seventy feet in length. These animal remains, we may observe, occur in the order in which the book of Genesis places the creation of the reptile and fishy tribes; and the extraordinary size of the skeletons, is in direct accordance with the description there given.

Chalk separates the secondary and tertiary formations; before this we do not meet with fossil mammalia, except in a few suspicious instances; the first we meet with are marine species, morses, dolphins and lamantins, but soon after we find terrestrial animals in tolerable abundance. Of these, Cuvier has discovered no less than forty species, all of which are now extinct.

With the animals found above the chalk, the history of our earth seems to commence, they have been destroyed by a great catastrophe in which water was the principal agent, and the memory of that catastrophe has been preserved in the traditions of all nations. Whatever may be thought of our attempt to illustrate the history of the creation, by a reference to Fossil Osteology, no body can doubt for a moment, that the researches into this subject establish the certainty of an universal deluge. Marine deposits are invariably found over the fossil remains of terrestrial animals, and consequently we cannot doubt that they were at some time whelmed beneath the waters. Thus do we find, that all the scientific researches of modern times contribute to strengthen the authority of the Holy Scriptures, and that those sciences which, partially known, seemed contradictory to the statements in the bible, have been found to furnish the strongest evidence in their favour, on a closer examination.